

HOUSE.....No. 66.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, April 9th, 1836.

The Committee appointed by this House, on the 25th ult,
“to consider the expediency of instructing the Senators
and requesting the Representatives of this Common-
wealth in the Congress of the United States, to use
their endeavors to obtain the passage of a law by Con-
gress, to prevent the introduction of foreign paupers
into this country, or to favor any other measures which
Congress may be disposed to adopt to effect the object,
have attended to the duty assigned them, and respect-
fully ask leave to

R E P O R T :

That, at this late period in the session of this Legisla-
ture, they have not thought it advisable to go into the
minute details of this most interesting not to say *alarming*
subject, especially as it has occupied so much of the at-

tention of this House, for several of the last years, and so much valuable information relating to it has heretofore been communicated. They have preferred to come directly to the point referred to their consideration, advert- ing only to such circumstances as seemed to have a direct bearing upon it.

The immense, insupportable, and by us almost incon- ceivable burden of pauperism in England, which originated at first in a well intended but ill judged and most disas- trous provision of law, would most naturally occupy the attention of her statesmen and philanthropists, and induce them to look in every direction for some efficient mode of relief. And it is not at all surprising, that the peculiar facilities and inducements for the emigration of paupers to this country, in our immediate contiguity to the British provinces, in our extended seacoast, and more than all, perhaps, in the comfortable provision here made for the poor, and "our open philanthropy and freedom in giving strangers a hearty welcome to our shores," have decided them to fix upon emigration hither, as the most available measure. Former committees of this House have per- ceived and pointed out the gradual developments of a plan to this effect. They have also perceived the insufficiency of any state enactments, "effectually" to prevent the rapid ingress of paupers to this country, under the operations of such a plan. An appeal to Congress has been considered the only adequate remedy of the evil. But so far as your committee have been informed, no such appeal has yet been made. They are solemnly of the opinion, however, that it cannot safely be any longer delayed. They have ascertained, that the plan of his majesty's poor law com- missioners, recommending the emigration of their poor, has not only reached its maturity, in positive enactments

of law; but has actually gone into operation. By the kindness of a gentleman, whose familiar acquaintance with every thing relating to this subject, and whose unlimited philanthropy and active benevolence in this city, makes it wholly unnecessary to mention his name, your committee have been favored with the following extracts, to which they beg the earnest attention of this House.

Under the 62d section of the Poor Law amendment act,* which is now the Poor Law of England, it is provided, “That it shall and may be lawful for the rate payers in any parish, and such of the owners of property therein, as shall have required their names to be entered in the rate books of such parishes respectively, and entitled to vote as owners, assembled at a meeting to be duly convened and held for the purpose,—to direct that such sum, or sums of money, not exceeding half the average yearly rate for the three preceding years, as the said owners and rate payers so assembled at such meeting may think proper, shall be raised or borrowed as a fund, or in aid of any fund, or contribution, for defraying the expenses of the emigration of poor persons having settlements in such parish, and willing to emigrate, to be paid out of, or charged upon the rates raised, or to be raised for the relief of the poor in said parish, and to be applied under and according to such rules, orders and regulations, as the said Commissioners shall, in that behalf direct;—provided always, that all sums of money so raised for the purposes of emigration, or such proportion thereof, as the said Commissioners, by any rule, order or regulation, shall from time to time direct, shall be recoverable against such

* SEE First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales, addressed to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, His Majesty's principal Secretary for the Home Department. pp. 41 and 91.

person, being above the age of 21 years, who, or whose family, or any part thereof, having consented to emigrate, shall refuse to emigrate after such expenses shall have been so incurred, or having emigrated shall return."

"The regulations here referred to, will be to the following effect.

1st. That parties emigrating shall go to some British Colony.

2d. A contract shall be entered into for conveying them to such place in the way of their destination, as the poor law commissioners for England and Wales, or the agent general for emigration shall approve.

3d. Such contract shall be sanctioned by the agent general for emigration, or by one of the government emigration agents at the out-ports, and shall include the maintenance and medical attendance of the emigrants during the passage; and also a provision, that on arrival at the place, to which the parties are contracted to be conveyed, the sum of £2 at least, to be paid to each head of a family emigrating, and £1 at least, to each single man or single woman, not being part of a family."

From a tabular view accompanying this extract, your committee find, that under the provisions of the Act above cited, 320 paupers, from nineteen parishes in eleven different counties, are reported to have emigrated, during the last year. Of these 320, the cost of whose transportation was £2473, or about £7 15s. 6d. per head; 9 went to Prince Edward's Island, 261 to Upper Canada, and the remaining 50 to the United States, notwithstanding the regulation restricting them "to some British Colony."

Now let it be considered, that England contains 15635 parishes. And supposing they should all conclude this year, to follow the example of the 19 reported, so "signal-

ly beneficial" in its results, our proportion of them would be about 41145. But alarming as this simple calculation may seem, it is but a trifle to what we have every reason to fear. When we consider that these paupers have no claim whatever upon the Provinces, how easy is the passage from the British North American Provinces to the United States; and the fact, so many times communicated to this Legislature, that nearly all of the host of foreign paupers, with which we are already infested, have come in by land through the Provinces; is there not reason enough to fear that we shall soon be inundated with population of this kind, if it cannot, by some means, be speedily prevented? No comment surely is necessary upon the fact, that 261 of the 320 above mentioned emigrants came to Upper Canada. Can it be, for a moment, supposed that England intends thus to burden her Colonies, or that her Colonies will quietly receive and provide for such accessions to their population?

As the result of their inquiries, therefore, your committee will only add the appended Resolve.

LEMUEL CAPEN,
JOHN Z. SHEAFE,
JOHN ARMS.

